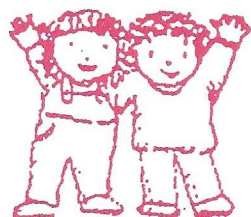


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~ BITS AND PIECES ~ OCTOBER, 2022



We hope you had a great summer and will enjoy the events that Autumn brings: Halloween, Guy Fawkes Night, Black Friday shopping deals and, dare we say it, the lead up to Christmas.



Here and now we bring you this newsletter with information and inspiration for all, no matter what stage of the CI journey your baby, child or young adult is at. We have family journeys, amazing CI users sharing their experiences, research, resources, CI manufacturers' updates, news, a CICS crossword to keep our younger readers busy, and lots more, all designed to brighten your day in these rather dismal times.

We've been busy preparing this newsletter - all you have to do is read it! Make a gap in your busy schedule, find a comfortable chair, spoil yourself with your favourite drink and snack - or make it a family affair and read it with the children. There's something for everyone, so wherever, however and with whoever you read it, just



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We doubt that Natasha Milton had time to do any crosswords this summer, but we certainly know it was a really enjoyable and rewarding time for her. She has just started the second year of her Sport Science degree course and definitely had a lot to tell her uni friends as they exchanged details about what they had done in the summer. Her adventure should have taken place in 2020 but, like so many things it was cancelled due to the pandemic. However, patience pays and Natasha was able to resurrect her plans this year. She tells us she had an amazing time on a trip that turned out to be



A LEARNING EXPERIENCE **WHILE HELPING OTHERS**

After a two year wait due to Covid I was lucky enough to go to Nepal on a trip organised by Volunteaars which is an organisation that arranges volunteering trips abroad for the deaf, hard of



hearing and hearing people. The trips are centred around a local deaf school, involving practical renovation work and activities with the deaf children, as well as cultural and trek experiences. All the trips are organised so they

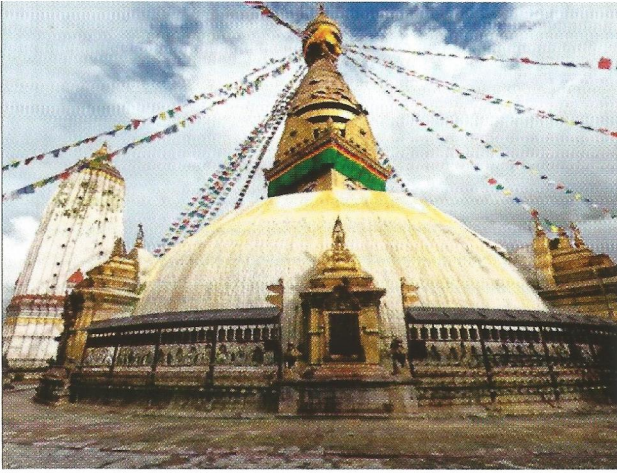
are deaf friendly and always include a BSL interpreter. I had a great time in Nepal and I would like to tell you a little about it

Nepal is situated between India and China, with scenic Himalayan mountains, distinctive Buddhist temples and colourful prayer flags. Many more people are deaf in Nepal due to poverty and ear infections than in the western world. Less than 50 years ago deaf Nepalis were incredibly isolated and had no access to sign language or deaf culture.



The first deaf school in Nepal was established in the 1960's in Kathmandu, and this is thought to have been the start of Nepalese sign language. In the villages there is little help for the deaf so children

are sent to deaf schools in the cities and often need to board. Most of them have no hearing devices to help access sounds and speech.



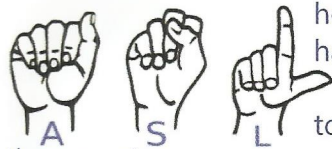
The trip started in Kathmandu, Nepal's capital city. We spent a few days exploring Kathmandu where we tried lots of new food, went shopping and visited some temples. My favourite food was Dahl Bhat. It is a Nepalese dish that is composed of rice and is often served with lots of small portions of different curries for you to try. One of the temples we visited was Swayambhu Mahachaitya, often known as the monkey temple. It was a really stunning temple on the top of a hill of steps swamped with loads of monkeys! From the temple there was an amazing view of Kathmandu where you could really start to get a sense of the kind of place it was.

After a couple of days in Kathmandu we drove to Pokhara, which is where the deaf school is located. The planned 7-hour journey actually took 15 hours due to a landslide, but we passed the time looking at the views and eating pineapple that we bought from a little house on the side of the road.

One of our main achievements on the trip was to renovate the boys' dormitory at the deaf school in Pokhara. We received a warm welcome from the school where the head mistress presented each of us with a colourful scarf. To renovate the room, we had to clean the walls, fill in the holes, prime the walls and tape up the edges. This preparation stage took the longest, with not much visible change to the room. After we had done all the preparation we started painting. Once the paint was on we were able to see a massive change in the room; it looked so much cleaner and the boys loved it!



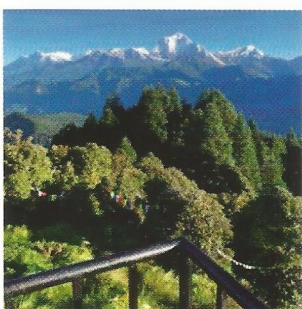
Whilst we were at the school we also took some lessons with the local students and did some activities with them. These included henna tattoos, ball games, arts and crafts, BSL lessons and general education on British Deaf culture. I am studying Sport Science at university so I was delighted to lead a sports lesson where we played some sort of volleyball game. I loved it and



hope the children did too! Some of the children did some henna on my hands. They were very keen to cover my arms with all kind of designs!

The kids taught us loads! We had to learn some American Sign Language to communicate with them, and they were very patient in helping us learn the new signs.

One afternoon we went to Chetana women's skill development centre. This centre contained some amazing pieces from purses, to scarfs, to table covers that were handmade by the women that worked there. However, this centre was more special than other weaving shops you may find in Pokhara. It is a non-profit organisation whose objective is to provide women with the vocational skills necessary to enable them to become self-reliant in relation to weaving and handicraft skills. In Nepal women are still heavily discriminated against and this often can lead to abuse. It was great to see an organisation with an owner who cares so much about the wellbeing of women in Nepal and to hear about all the outstanding things she does to create a safe space for as many women as she can.



We had a break from the school to go on a 3 day trek in the Himalayan mountains. The trek consisted of a lot of steps which never seemed to end! Sometimes we walked through woods, sometimes we were out in the open with a great view of the valleys below. The highlight of the trek was Poon Hill on the third day. We got up early and walked to the top of Poon Hill to watch the sunrise. We were so lucky it was clear and had an amazing 360 view of all the mountains around us, not a view I will forget anytime soon. Overnight we stayed in teahouses. These are quite basic

bunkhouses each with rooms of 2/3 beds. The food was made fresh and it was so tasty, which was just what we needed after a long day of walking.

On the trek we were led through the mountains by a group of local guides. They were very helpful on the rough terrain giving us a hand when we needed it. We also had porters who carried our bags which made our trek much easier and more enjoyable. We all appreciated their hard work after the trek - it would not have been possible without them! After this we had a much needed rest day and treated ourselves to some time at an outdoor rooftop hotel pool overlooking the lake in Pokhara - blissful!



I had an fantastic time in Nepal. I made lots of new friends, had some amazing experiences of a completely new place and gained lots of confidence in travelling long distances without my family. VoluntEars has given me an amazing kickstart to what I hope is just the start of my travelling experiences and I hope to join them on another trip in the not-too-distant future!



I recommend VoluntEars trips to anyone interested in learning about the Deaf culture in other countries who also wants to make a small change in someone's life.

If you would like to find out more about VoluntEars have a look at:

the website:

www.voluntears.info

or contact Richard Clowes direct at:

contact@voluntears.info

or:

07713 752124



What a wonderful and rewarding experience for Natasha and what a great role model she must have been for all the deaf children she met in Nepal. We do hope she gets to go on another trip with VoluntEars and that she will have the many exciting travelling experiences she is hoping for.

If any readers are interested in VoluntEars and have questions they would like to ask Natasha please contact Tricia at CICS who will put you in touch with her.